

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is requested.

Claims 1-15 remain in the application. Each of the independent claims has been amended to define the invention more clearly. Additionally, each of the claims has been amended to eliminate the numeric references. Numeric references are not required under U.S. patent law and are given no patentable weight. Accordingly, an amendment to eliminate numeric references is not a narrowing amendment and is not an amendment entered for purposes of patentability. Additionally, claims 2, 5, 8, 11 and 14 have been amended to address the objections that were raised in the Office Action.

The Examiner objected to the drawings. Replacement sheets are provided for FIGS. 4 and 8. The Examiner will note that the hatching that had been in FIG. 4 has been removed entirely. The hatching was not intended to identify a cross section, but rather was provided merely to show the area of the hinge in which bending is facilitated. It is believed that FIG. 4 is more clear without the hatching.

All of the claims were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) or 35 USC 103(a) as being anticipated or render obvious by Crimmins et al. The Examiner identified elements of the Crimmins et al. reference that were considered to be equivalents to the structure recited in the original claims. Additionally, the Examiner provided very helpful annotated drawings to show the Examiner's interpretation of Crimmins et al.

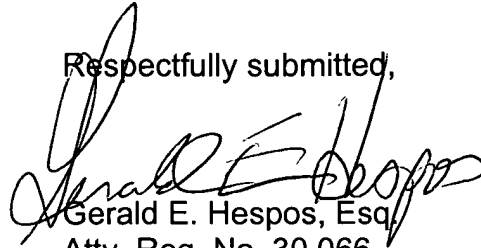
Crimmins et al. is directed to a two-wire socket with an insulator 10 formed unitarily from a nonconductive material. The insulator 10 includes first and second wire supports 16 and 17 joined unitarily to one another by a web 18. The web 18 permits the supports 16 and 17 to be rotated towards or away from one another about a hinge line

perpendicular to the plane of the paper for FIGS. 4 and 5 of Crimmins et al. The web 18 has a long dimension parallel or coincident to the axis of rotation. All of the web 18 appears to be of uniform thickness. The Crimmins et al. insulator 10 also has a tongue 15 extending from the web 18. The requirement for the tongue 15 would seem to preclude any changes in the thickness dimension of the web 18 in a way that would facilitate or otherwise alter bending characteristics.

It is believed that the clarifying amendments to the independent claims define the location and orientation of the weakened portion relative to the longitudinal direction of the hinge and/or relative to the rotational axis defined by the hinge. These clarified definitions of the claimed weakened portion are entirely inconsistent with Crimmins et al. In particular, the Crimmins et al. reference has no suggestion of a flexible hinge with a longitudinal direction extending between the opposite ends of the hinge that are coupled to each of two members and with a weakened portion that has a length extending parallel to longitudinal direction of the hinge. The weakened portion of amended claim 1 has a width that extends normal to the longitudinal direction and hence parallel to the bending axis of the hinge in amended claim 1. Conversely, the longitudinal dimension of the Crimmins et al. web is coincident with the axis of rotation. Similar limitations are in the other independent claims. Additionally, amended claims 3, 8 and 12 clearly define the weakened portion as being a slit extending entirely through the hinge in the thickness direction. The Crimmins et al. reference has no slit, and a slit through the web would impede the ability of the web to support the tongue 15.

In view of the preceding amendments and remarks, it is submitted that the amended claims define patentably over Crimmins et al. and allowance is solicited. The Examiner is urged to contact applicant's attorney at the number below to expedite the prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerald E. Hespos", is written over the typed name and contact information.

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